

Volume 03 Issue 4

October 29, 2003

# The Navigator

Waukesha County Veterans' Services

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

### FEDERAL BENEFITS

- P 1—VA Seeks Former POWs for Possible Benefits
- P 2—COMMENTARY CORNER
- P 3—The Milwaukee Vet Center; Breaking the Paradigm, While Keeping the Promise
- P 4—Gulf War Service—ALS (Lou Gehrig Disease) Link Confirmed
- P 5—VA and Operation Hope Sign Cooperation Agreement
- P 5—VA Increases Payment to Medal of Honor Recipients
- P 6—America's Wars
- P 8—VA Makes Good on Pledge to Reduce Claims Backlog
- P 9—VA Broadens Benefits for Partial Loss of Breast
- P 9—VA Opening New Outpatient Clinic in Green Bay

### STATE BENEFITS

- P 10—BOB HOPE—By Raymond G. Boland, Secretary (WDVA)
- P 11—New Veterans Affairs Secretary Appointed
- P 12—Small Business Entrepreneurial Training for Veterans is Looking For a Few More Good Men & Women
- P 12—Troops to Teachers Program (TTT) Veterans, National Guard Personnel and Reservists May Receive Financial Assistance While Making Transition to Teaching Career
- P 13—Veterans, Do You Need Help to Start or Run Your Business? FastTrac—Take Charge of Your Business
- P 14—Veterans Affairs Grants \$1.7 Million Federal Grant for Additions to Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Union Grove
- P 14—Cemetery Expansion Project—Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Union Grove
- P 15—Wisconsin Veterans Museum—Calendar of Events

### LOCAL AREA

- P 16—The HELP Center
- P 16—St. John's Military School—Flag Pageant & Salute to Veterans
- P 16—North Lake Elementary School—Welcome Waukesha County Veterans

## FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL BENEFITS UPDATE

### NEWS UPDATE FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS



### VA Seeks Former POWs for Possible Benefits

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/news>

WASHINGTON (Sept. 19, 2003) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is asking former prisoners of war not currently using VA benefits to contact VA to find out if they may be eligible for disability compensation and other services.

More than 23,000 former prisoners of war (POWs) already receive compensation from VA. This year, the department mailed information about benefits to another 4,700 known ex-POWs not on its rolls. However, VA estimates there could be as many as 11,000 more POWs for whom it does not have an address.

Today, on National POW-MIA Recognition Day, VA is asking former POWs not receiving benefits who did not receive a VA letter recently to call the department at 1-800-827-1000.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi said VA has expanded policies to cover increasing numbers of former POWs as new illnesses have been found related to captivity. The administration currently is pressing to get even more compensation and medical care benefits for former POWs.

"These veterans sacrificed for their country in time of war, and it's the nation's turn to serve them, to help them determine if they are entitled to compensation, health care or other services," Principi said.

Nine out of ten former POWs are veterans of World War II, and their service predates the use of Social Security numbers as a military "service number." That,

coupled with the decades that have elapsed since their service, makes it difficult for VA to track down those who have not opened a file with VA in recent years.

"On this POW-MIA Recognition Day, VA is asking veterans and all Americans who know of a former POW to help spread the word that benefits and services may be just a phone call away," Principi said.

The most recent expansion of VA benefits for former POWs was a July regulation that added cirrhosis of the liver to the list of diseases to which entitlement to disability compensation is presumed in former POWs.

Similar policies making it easier for former POWs to obtain compensation have been enacted for POWs detained for 30 days or more who develop specific illnesses.

Former POWs have a special eligibility for enrollment in VA medical care and are exempt from making co-payments for inpatient and outpatient medical care. They have the same copay rules as other veterans for medications and for extended care. Free dental treatment for any dental condition is available to former POWs held for more than 90 days.

More information about VA services for former POWs is available at <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Benefits/POW/>.

## COMMENTARY CORNER By: John L. Margowski, Director

As this newsletter goes to print, the Veterans Administration (VA) is operating on a continuing resolution. Congress has yet to resolve the VA/HUD budget. The House is working on a second Continuing Resolution (CR). H.J. Res 69 expires on October 31. By law, Congress is required to complete all appropriations bills before October 1 when the new fiscal year begins. Out of the 13 appropriations bills the President has only signed into law Defense, Homeland Security and the Legislative Branches at the FY04 levels.

It appears that no matter what compromise budget is approved by Congress, the VA budget will again be short.

On both the Health Care side and the Benefits side, the VA has worked very hard this year to reduce the numbers of individuals who are waiting for Health Care appointments as well as those waiting for VA Benefits claims to be processed. In my humble opinion, a budget shortfall for the next fiscal year, which has already started, will

again lead to waiting lists for both Health Care and Benefits.

I, and others in the veterans' business have been discussing the number of WWII, Korea and Vietnam veterans who are passing away. Yet the number of future veterans is increasing because the Gulf War period is still open. National Guard, Reserves and Regular Forces are still involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and still fighting in Afghanistan and other areas throughout the world. These future veterans will need the VA for Health Care and for Benefits. Congress has already had the wisdom to provide for these future veterans to receive two years of medical care from the VA after they are separated from military service. The VA will need a strong budget to be able to meet the needs of these new veterans. It is important for veterans to continue to lobby their federal legislators to ensure that adequate funding is made available for the VA's budget. As mentioned earlier, Defense and Homeland Security dominate current and future budget deliberations.

I am very thankful that the State of Wisconsin had the foresight many years ago, to establish a County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) in every County. That puts in place someone whose job it is to advocate and assist veterans, their dependants and their survivors with applications for federal and state benefits.

Obtaining Federal VA benefits, such as compensation, is not a cut and dried process. Many veterans have waited for years to file a claim. Through a CVSO Office or Service Office of a veterans organization, many veterans have received benefits they would not have received without someone advocating and fighting for them.

If you are a veteran who has not filed his/her claim for service connection or other benefits that you have earned, see your CVSO or State Service Officer of your Veterans' Organization. Make an appointment, go in and find out what is needed to file your claim, apply for a loan or enroll for VA Health Care.

As we approach Veterans' Day in November I encourage all of you to attend a Veterans' Day activity somewhere. Take a friend, neighbor, family member or grandchild to one of the events.

A special veterans activity that my Department is involved in is taking veterans into the county schools to speak to students about their military experiences. If you are available, and want to tell your story, contact my office so that I can discuss this wonderful opportunity with you. Lets continue to inform our youth of the important role that veterans have and will have in shaping this nation.



### LOCATED AT:

Human Services Center  
500 Riverview Ave Rm G138  
Waukesha WI 53188-3680

Phone: 262-548-7732

FAX: 262-896-8588

TTD: 262-548-7311

E-Mail:

[jmargowski@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:jmargowski@waukeshacounty.gov)

or

[vetserve@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:vetserve@waukeshacounty.gov)

**Web Page:**

[www.waukeshacounty.gov/veterans/](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/veterans/)

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***If you have any questions or comments about the contents of the newsletter, please contact Waukesha County Veterans' Service Office at 262-548-7732.***

## The Milwaukee Vet Center; Breaking the Paradigm, While Keeping the Promise

The following information was received from the Milwaukee Vet Center

Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers operated by the Readjustment Counseling Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

In 1979, the United States Congress mandated the establishment of Vet Centers to provide readjustment counseling services to Vietnam era veterans, who were experiencing problems adjusting from military life to civilian life after having served during war times.

Due to the success of the Vet Centers in addressing the needs of combat veterans, the program was expanded to include veterans who served in Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Korea and World War II.

Eligibility for services is now open to  
**all war zone veterans, all eras:**

- ◆ Vietnam War..... 02/28/1961—05/07/1975
- ◆ Vietnam Era Veterans (not in the war zone) 08/05/1964—05/07/1975 (eligible until January 1, 2004)
- ◆ WWII.....12/07/1941—12/31/1946
- ◆ Korean War.....06/27/1950—01/31/1955
- ◆ Lebanon.....08/25/1982—02/26/1984
- ◆ Grenada.....10/23/1983—11/21/1983
- ◆ Panama.....12/20/1989—01/31/1990
- ◆ Persian Gulf.....08/02/1990—
- ◆ Somalia.....09/17/1992—
- ◆ American Merchant Marines (In ocean-going service during the period of Dec. 1941—Aug 15, 1945).
- ◆ Operations Joint Endeavor, Joint Guard, Joint Forge; Veterans in one of these 3 successive operations in the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia-Herzegovina, aboard US Navel vessels operating in the Adriatic Sea, or air spaces above those areas).
- ◆ In addition, we are authorized to provide counseling services to veterans and family members of those who were activated for “Operation Iraqi Freedom,” including the Global War on Terrorism; veterans who serve or have served in military expeditions to combat terrorism on or after 09/11/2001 and before a terminal date yet to be established.
- ◆ Sexual Trauma/Harassment Counseling: veterans of both sexes, all eras; survivors of sexual trauma that occurred while in the military.

Over the past several months, the Milwaukee Vet Center, located at 5401 N. 76th St., Milwaukee, WI, has undergone important and dramatic changes on the road to both “keeping the promise” and fulfilling our commitment to expanding the veterans’ service delivery vehicle to meet the needs of those who have served during time of war or conflict.

The progress we have made has been remarkable. We began with a commitment to:

- ◆ Raise veterans awareness of available professional services at the Vet Center
- ◆ Link veterans with the benefits and services they have well earned
- ◆ Increase our saturation into the minority and female veterans market
- ◆ Improve overall customer service; be more responsive to needs

We provide a holistic approach to offering veterans’ readjustment services. Better hours of operation with more outstation locations; increase opportunities for veterans to obtain services.

- ◆ Improved accessibility
- ◆ Strong Veteran advocacy
- ◆ Quality Counseling and Clinical Services

As part of this expansion process, we are improving the quality of service we provide to veterans. This effort began in earnest with the recent selection a new Team Leader, and continued with raising the number staff to the full complement. This includes 3 Masters level Therapists, one professional Counselor who is a Vietnam combat veteran, and a seasoned Office Manager. This re-energized veterans’ service team is focused on meeting the needs of eligible veterans, with a special emphasis on female, minority, disabled, recently activated members of the Reserves, and those who served in the “Global War on Terrorism.”

The Milwaukee Vet Center has a team of highly qualified and dedicated staff available to serve you. However, you must take the first step. If you believe you, or someone you know could benefit from our confidential services, we are only a telephone call away.

You are invited to come in and visit the new improved Milwaukee Vet Center, 5401 N. 76th St., Milwaukee, WI., 414-536-1301.

## Gulf War Service—ALS (Lou Gehrig Disease) Link Confirmed

The following information was found at [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/)

WASHINGTON – A recent scientific study supports a 22-month policy by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to recognize amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) among veterans of the Gulf War as a service-connected illness.

"Based upon preliminary research available in December 2001, I felt it was appropriate for us to act swiftly," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "I'm gratified that the final study supports that decision."

The study found that veterans who were deployed to the combat theater during the Gulf War were nearly twice as likely to develop the disease as veterans not deployed to the Gulf, accounting for 40 of the 107 cases identified among military personnel. The incidence of ALS was especially high among deployed Air Force personnel, who were 2.7 times more likely to develop ALS than non-deployed Air Force personnel.

"Earlier research did not provide a definitive answer to this issue," said lead author Ronnie D. Horner, Ph.D. Horner was with VA's Epidemiologic Research and Informa-

tion Center in Durham, N.C., when the research was conducted, and is now with the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. "We now have compelling evidence that service in the Gulf is associated with the occurrence of ALS among veterans of the '90-'91 Gulf War."

Another recent study by Dr. Robert W. Haley of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas also supports VA's decision to officially recognize ALS as a service-connected illness for VA benefits.

The new ALS study, published in the Sept. 23 issue of the scientific journal *Neurology* and funded by VA and the Department of Defense (DoD), does not identify a cause for the disease or the increased occurrence in this group of veterans.

ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, kills cells in the brain and spinal cord that control muscle movement, resulting in gradual wasting of the muscles. Fatal in most cases, the disease usually strikes people between ages 40 and 70. The cause of the disease is unknown.

Earlier this year, VA established a national ALS registry to identify veterans with the disease -- regardless of when they served -- and track their health status. Veterans with ALS who enroll will complete an initial telephone interview covering their health and military service and will be interviewed twice yearly thereafter.

For more information about VA's ALS Registry, based at the Durham VA Medical Center, call 1-877-DIAL-ALS (1-877-342-5257) or e-mail [ALS@med.va.gov](mailto:ALS@med.va.gov).

The ALS Association and researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advised the study leaders. Numerous medical, academic, veteran and voluntary health organizations provided assistance in conducting the study.

Since 1994, the departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services have spent \$213 million on 224 research projects relating to the health effects of military deployment. VA plans to spend up to an additional \$20 million by the end of fiscal 2004.



# Happy Halloween





## VA and Operation Hope Sign Cooperation Agreement

The following information was found at [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/)

WASHINGTON (Sept. 25, 2003) - Leaders of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Operation Hope Inc. recently signed an agreement that will provide veterans the needed tools in financial planning, both for individuals and small business owners.

"Today's collaboration stands to provide veterans an understanding of money management that will advance their financial education on both a personal and professional level," said Dr. Leo S. Mackay Jr., Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "I am truly heartened that one of my last official acts in government is to help launch a program that will heighten veterans' understanding of financial management."

The memorandum of understanding, signed Sept. 24 in VA's central office, builds on the achievements of the department's Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE). CVE helps promote business ownership and expansion for veterans. It provides assistance for veterans, including service-disabled veterans, who are considering starting or expanding a business.

The agreement will also assist VA in its many pro-

grams for homeless veterans by helping those veterans to develop the financial skills necessary for self-sufficiency. "Homeless veterans need financial literacy as a survival skill," said Mackay, who steps down from his VA post Sept. 30 after 29 months in office.

Operation Hope Inc. is a national non-profit organization that seeks to bring economic self-sufficiency to America's inner city and underserved communities. Founder and Chairman John Bryant has been cited by four U.S. presidents for his work to empower low-wealth communities across America.

"This alliance will be an educational investment in the future of America's veterans and in the future of this great nation," said Mackay. "It will nourish homeless veterans as they move to independence and help the CVE provide entrepreneurial veterans the training, outreach and counseling they will need to succeed professionally."

For information about other business opportunities and programs for veterans, visit VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise Web page at <http://www.vetbiz.gov>.

## VA Increases Payment to Medal of Honor Recipients

The following information was found at [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/)

WASHINGTON (Oct. 8, 2003) - Monthly federal payments to 136 living recipients of the Medal of Honor are rising 67 percent this month.

Since at least World War I, the federal government's agency for veterans—now the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) - has paid a monthly stipend to holders of the military's highest decoration for combat valor. Under the new rates, the payments will rise from \$600 monthly to \$1,000 monthly.

"This increase reflects in small part the thanks of President Bush and a grateful nation for the uncommon valor and bravery of these veterans," said VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi. "They are living examples

of sacrifice, love of country and dedication to duty."

The increase was authorized by the Veterans Benefits Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-330), which also set up a formula for future increases in the Medal of Honor stipend based on the annual rate of inflation.

Previously, each increase in the Medal of Honor stipend required a specific act of Congress. The rate went from \$10 in 1916 to \$100 in 1961, \$200 in 1979, \$400 in 1993 and \$600 in 1998.

The new law also provides for a retroactive payment of stipends to cover the period between the act of valor and the awarding of the

Medal of Honor.

For those previously non-covered months or years, the payment will be based on the rate in effect at the time of the act of valor.

Adjustment checks covering the month of September and any retroactive payments due will be released to Medal of Honor recipients this month. The new rate will be reflected in regular monthly payments starting Nov. 1.

VA supported legislation for the rate increase, inflation adjustments and retroactive payments. The benefits will total approximately \$6.1 million through fiscal year 2012.



## America's Wars

The following information was found at [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/)

### American Revolution (1775-1783)

Total U.S. Servicemembers	217,000
Battle Deaths	4,435
Non-mortal Woundings	6,188

### War of 1812 (1812-1815)

Total U.S. Servicemembers	286,730
Battle Deaths	2,260
Non-mortal Woundings	4,505

### Indian Wars (approx. 1817-1898)

Total U.S. Servicemembers (VA estimate)	106,000
Battle Deaths (VA estimate)	1,000

### Mexican War (1846-1848)

Total U.S. Servicemembers	78,718
Battle Deaths	1,733
Other Deaths in Service	11,550
Non-mortal Woundings	4,152

### Civil War (1861-1865)

Total U.S. Servicemembers (Union)	2,213,363
Battle Deaths (Union)	140,414
Other Deaths in Service (Union)	224,097
Non-mortal Woundings (Union)	281,881
Total Servicemembers (Conf.)	1,050,000
Battle Deaths (Confederate)	74,524
Other Deaths in Service (Confederate)	59,297*
Non-mortal Woundings (Confederate)	Unknown

### Spanish-American War (1898-1902)

Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide)	306,760
Battle Deaths	385
Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater)	2,061
Non-mortal Woundings	1,662

### World War I (1917-1918)

Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide)	4,734,991
Battle Deaths	53,402
Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater)	63,114
Non-mortal Woundings	204,002
Living Veterans	Less than 200

### World War II (1941-1945)

Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide)	16,112,566
Battle Deaths	291,557
Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater)	113,842
Non-mortal Woundings	671,846
Living Veterans	4,370,000

\* Does not include 26,000 to 31,000 who died in Union prisons.

Source: Department of Defense (DoD), except living veterans, which are VA estimates. Estimates are as of September 30, 2003.

### Korean War (1950-1953)

Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide)	5,720,000
Battle Deaths	33,741
Other Deaths (In Theater)	2,835
Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater)	17,670
Non-mortal Woundings	103,284
Living Veterans	3,580,000

### Vietnam War (1964-1975)

Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide)	9,200,000
Deployed to Southeast Asia	3,403,000
Battle Deaths	47,415
Other Deaths (In Theater)	10,785
Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater)	32,000
Non-mortal Woundings	153,303
Living Veterans	8,211,000

### Desert Shield/Desert Storm (1990-1991)

Total U.S. Servicemembers (Worldwide)	2,322,332
Deployed to Gulf	694,550
Battle Deaths	147
Other Deaths (In Theater)	235
Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater)	914
Non-mortal Woundings	467
Living Veterans	1,889,000

### America's Wars Total

U.S. Military Service During War	42,348,460
Battle Deaths	651,013
Other Deaths (In Theater)	13,855
Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater)	524,545
Non-mortal Woundings	1,431,290
Living War Veterans	16,897,000**
Living Veterans (War & Peacetime Periods)	25,179,000

\*\* Unless otherwise indicated, estimates for living U.S. veterans are based on the 2000 Census, except for WWI, which is based on the 1990 Census, the last census to include WWI figures. Dates for periods of service used in census data may differ slightly from those of VA and DoD.

The total number of war veterans does not equal the sum of veterans shown for individual war periods because approximately 890,000 living veterans served in two conflicts and an additional 130,000 served in three conflicts. These individuals are counted in each period in which they served, but are counted only once in the America's Wars Total figures.

The living Gulf War veterans estimate is the number of surviving servicemembers who served on active duty during the period of August 1990 through June 1991 who have since left active military service.

"Other deaths in Service" is the number of U.S. servicemembers who died outside the combat theater, regardless of the cause of death.

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<b>American Revolution</b> Last Veteran, Daniel F. Bakeman, died 4/5/1869, age 109 Last Widow, Catherine S. Damon, died 11/11/06, age 92 Last Dependent, Phoebe M. Palmeter, died 4/25/11, age 90	<b>Mexican War</b> Last Veteran, Owen Thomas Edgar, died 9/3/29, age 98 Last Widow, Lena James Theobald, died 6/20/63, age 89 Last Dependent, Jesse G. Bivens, died 11/1/62, age 94
<b>War of 1812</b> Last Veteran, Hiram Cronk, died 5/13/05, age 105 Last Widow, Carolina King, died 6/28/36, age unknown Last Dependent, Esther A.H. Morgan, died 3/12/46, age 89	<b>Civil War</b> Last Union Veteran, Albert Woolson, died 8/2/56, age 109 Last Confederate Veteran, John Salling, died 3/16/58, age 112 Last Union Widow, Gertrude Janeway, died 1/17/2003, age 93
<b>Indian Wars</b> Last Veteran, Fredrak Fraske, died 6/18/73, age 101	<b>Spanish-American War</b> Last veteran, Nathan E. Cook, died 9/10/92, age 106

It is estimated that the number of living World War II U.S. veterans will be:

9/30/03 ..... 4,370,000	9/30/04 ..... 3,984,000	9/30/05 ..... 3,607,000	9/30/06 ..... 3,242,000
9/30/07 ..... 2,889,000	9/30/08 ..... 2,551,000	9/30/09 ..... 2,230,000	9/30/10 ..... 1,929,000
9/30/11 ..... 1,649,000	9/30/12 ..... 1,393,000	9/30/13 ..... 1,161,000	9/30/14 ..... 954,000
9/30/15 ..... 773,000	9/30/16 ..... 616,000	9/30/17 ..... 484,000	9/30/18 ..... 373,000
9/30/19 ..... 283,000	9/30/20 ..... 210,000		

**U.S. Veterans and Dependents on the  
Compensation and Pension Rolls as of  
September 2003**

	<b>VETERANS</b>	<b>CHILDREN</b>	<b>PARENTS</b>	<b>SURVIVING SPOUSES</b>
Civil War	-	5	-	-
Indian Wars	-	1	-	-
Spanish-American War	-	175	-	228
Mexican Border	2	23	-	119
World War I	44	4,882	1	14,822
World War II	545,794	17,383	602	254,898
Korean Conflict	240,638	3,770	856	62,412
Vietnam Era	983,240	11,752	4,791	130,748
Gulf War I <sup>1</sup>	479,203	10,127	430	8,759
<b>TOTAL WARTIME</b>	<b>2,248,921</b>	<b>48,118</b>	<b>6,680</b>	<b>471,986</b>
Nonservice-connected	346,555	24,066	-	207,262
Service-connected	1,902,366	24,052	6,680	264,724

<sup>1</sup> For compensation and pension purposes, the Gulf War I period has not yet been terminated.

## VA Makes Good on Pledge to Reduce Claims Backlog

The following information was found at [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/)

WASHINGTON (Oct. 8, 2003) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi today declared partial victory in the Bush administration's battle to reduce the backlog of veterans' compensation claims.

On Sept. 30, the Secretary made good on his pledge when the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pending inventory dropped to 253,000 claims, representing a 41 percent reduction in inventory from a high of 432,000.

"I am very proud of all the hard work our employees around the country have done over the past two years to get our backlog down," Principi said. "We must not, however, let our guard down now that the inventory of claims has returned to normal levels. We must build on this success."

A cornerstone of Principi's pledge to the nation in 2001 was to reduce the pending claims workload in VA to 250,000 rating claims by Sept. 30, 2003. This number represents a normal workload inventory because of the complex process involved in gathering all the information and evidence needed to decide a veteran's claim.

To convert that pledge to an actionable plan, Principi chartered the VA

Claims Processing Task Force shortly after taking office. Chaired by the current Under Secretary for Benefits, Daniel L. Cooper, the task force recommended a series of changes to improve the claims process, which Cooper has implemented.

As a result, VA has over the past two years decided about 68,000 claims per month, an increase of more than 70 percent from the 2001 level of about 40,000 per month.

"Reducing the claims inventory level is important, but is only part of the administration's goals for improving service to veterans," said Cooper. "A is continuing to make gains in reducing the time a veteran must wait for a decision on a claim while focusing equal attention on ensuring the accuracy of our decisions."

Principi also set as a goal the completion of veterans' claims in an average of 100 days. This goal, while not yet achieved, is within VA's grasp.

"In February 2002, it took an average of 233 days, or more than seven months, to adjudicate a new disabili-

ty claim. Although we have reduced that average to 156 days, I hope that in the months ahead we'll be able to announce we are at 100 days, giving veterans the service they deserve," Principi said.

It is also significant to note that the average age of the claims in VA's inventory has been reduced from over 200 days to 111 days.

The improvements in claims processing have not been made at the expense of quality. VA's measure of the accuracy of its benefit entitlement decisions is now at 85 percent, an improvement from an 81 percent accuracy level in fiscal year 2002.

As VA works toward continued improvement in quality and the 100-day goal to render a decision, Principi has directed all employees to give special priority to the claims of veterans returning home with injuries sustained in Iraq and Afghanistan.

VA continues to work closely with the Department of Defense to find better ways to coordinate efforts related to delivery of benefits to service members returning home from conflicts around the world.

# FREE

## Advertise Your Post or Organization Event Fish Fry—Bingo—Card Clubs—Fund Raiser, etc.

Contact the: Waukesha County Veterans Service Office

500 Riverview Avenue

Waukesha WI 53188

Phone: 262-548-7732

Fax #: 262-896-8588

E-mail address:

[jmargowski@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:jmargowski@waukeshacounty.gov)



## VA Broadens Benefits for Partial Loss of Breast

The following information was found at [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/)

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is broadening its coverage of special monthly compensation for women who suffer loss of breast tissue related to their military service.

The new regulation replaces a policy that limited the special compensation to women veterans losing one or both breasts.

The new rule liberalizes the benefit to cover those losing 25 percent or more tissue from a single breast or from both breasts in combination. It includes loss by mastectomy or partial mastectomy, or following radiation treatment.

Payments retroactive to Jan. 1, 2003, may be made to eligible women. Women veterans with service-connected breast tissue loss who are not receiving the special monthly compensation may contact VA to find out if they are eligible under the new provisions.

The current special compensation rate of \$81 monthly for breast loss is in addition to the underlying disability compensation for a condition arising or worsening while in the military.

In addition to breast tissue loss, special monthly compensation rates also apply when a veteran loses one or more of the senses of sight, hearing and speech, experiences loss of a reproductive organ or its use, or suffers severe injuries such as loss of limbs.

Base rates of disability payments before special monthly compensation generally range from \$104 to \$2,193 per month for a single veteran depending on the degree of disability.

The breast benefit provision was included in the Veterans Benefits Act of 2002. In enacting the provisions, President Bush and Congress recognized the physical, emotional and financial challenges women face as they return to health and acknowledged their need for increased medical attention.

The rule is the latest in a series of changes that have improved VA's services to women veterans, including changes to make it easier for women to establish service-connection for gynecological and breast disorders and to provide more consistent evaluations.

## VA Opening New Outpatient Clinic in Green Bay

The following information was found at [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/)

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will open a new community-based outpatient clinic for veterans in Green Bay, Wisc., on Dec. 1.

The new clinic, which will serve 1,200 veterans, is expected to decrease waiting times at VA's Appleton and Cleveland clinics.

"The new clinic will greatly benefit Wisconsin veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "This new clinic will mean reduced travel distances, shortened waiting times for follow-up care and more timely attention to medical problems for veterans."

The opening of the new clinic was recommended in the first phase of VA's planning process called Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES).

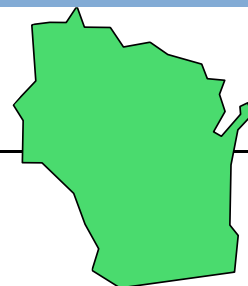
VA will lease the Mattson Building, 141 Siegler Lane, for use as the outpatient clinic. The building will be turned over to VA on Nov. 1, and patients will be seen beginning Dec. 1. The clinic will occupy 7,616 square feet of the building.

The Green Bay VA facility will serve veterans in Brown, Door, Kewaunee and Oconto counties. Clinic staff will include a physi-

cian, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, social worker and a patient services assistant. They will provide primary and some mental health care and operate as a satellite of the Milwaukee VA Medical Center. The center also operates community-based clinics at Appleton, Union Grove and Cleveland.

The primary care clinic will focus on medical histories, physical examinations, health assessments, routine laboratory work and outpatient care. Laboratory specimens will be sent to the Milwaukee VA for testing. Radiology will be contracted out to a facility in the community.

## NEWS UPDATE FOR STATE BENEFITS



### **BOB HOPE—By Raymond G. Boland, Secretary Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)**

The following information received from WDVA Secretary's Column for VSO Publications

The passing of Bob Hope in July at 100 years of age brought back memories for us all as we were reminded of his many years of great service and dedication to our soldiers. For nearly six decades, "GI Bob" traveled to all ends of the world to bring goodwill and a boost of morale to our U.S. servicemen and women. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Hope in 1990 while serving as Commander at Ft. McCoy.

Just as Bob Hope dedicated his time and efforts to entertaining the troops overseas and here in the USA, during these recent times of war in Iraq, we know that Hope's example of dedication and commitment is still very important. When our servicemembers return home as veterans, we are committed to serving them by providing benefits and services they have earned.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, I informed the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs that I will be retiring, effective October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Board accepted my resignation and has begun a search for a new Department Secretary. As I look back over my years of ser-

vice as your Secretary, I think of the many things we have accomplished together, but I think most about you, the veterans of Wisconsin.

You have not only provided the purpose but also the inspiration for all of the efforts we have undertaken. As we expanded and built new facilities, created new programs, increased benefits, and preserved our history, through it all you were the "wind beneath our wings."

It has been a joy to travel throughout our great state and meet so many of you. In posts and chapters, in towns and events large and small, at meetings, ceremonies, conventions, and dedications, I have been so very proud to see our veterans standing tall in their communities, carrying our colors, saluting and maintaining the special spirit that is shared by all of us who have ever worn the uniform.

It has also been a great pleasure for me over the last eleven and a half years to work with the



Board of Veterans Affairs, County Veterans Service Officers, the Veterans Service Organizations, the Office of the Governor, the State Legislature, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, local officials, and many other agencies and organizations in continuing our objectives for helping veterans.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all who have dedicated their time, efforts, and partnership to the mission of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. Together we have provided the best state benefits program in the nation, and we can all take pride in what we have accomplished.

Lastly, I would like to say to everyone, "Thanks for the memories."

# November 11th Happy Veterans' Day

America is #1—Thanks to our Veterans



## New Veterans Affairs Secretary Appointed

The following information was found on the internet at: [www.wisgov.state.wi.us/pressreleases](http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/pressreleases)

MADISON -- In a Madison public meeting attended by legislators and staff members, veterans community leaders, and members of the media, the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs today appointed John A. Scocos as the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA).

"John Scocos is experienced, knowledgeable, and dedicated," said Kathleen Marschman, Board chair. "He has been a significant and effective leader in championing veterans issues, and he brings a wealth of management and legislative experience that will serve to benefit our state's veterans," she said.

Prior to being appointed as Secretary, Scocos served as WDVA Deputy Secretary since January 2002, and as the department's Executive Assistant for several years. He also served with the Wisconsin State Assembly as the Chief Clerk and Sergeant at Arms for two terms. Prior to serving with the Wisconsin State Assembly, he was a legislative aide in the Wisconsin State Senate.

Scocos enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1979 and in 1981 he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant upon graduation from the Reserve Officer Training Program. He has commanded military units from platoon leader to battalion command level organizations. In addition he served during

Operation Joint Endeavor (Bosnia). With over 24 years of active and reserve military service, he currently serves in the Ready Reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel.

He received his Bachelor of Science from Mankato State University and his Teacher's Certification from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has a Masters of Business Administration from Touro University, New York. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College and numerous other military courses at the Army Armor and Infantry schools. He is also a graduate of the Duke University Governor's Executive Program.

John is a native of Madison, Wisconsin and the son of a WWII ex-POW. John is active in the Greek Orthodox Church in Madison and is a member of various civic groups in Dane County. He is Past President of the Dane County Veterans Commission and the Madison Veterans Council and a member of numerous veterans service organizations. He lives in Madison with his wife, Kelly, stepdaughter Chloe, and son Andreas.

The Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs is a citizen board that oversees the state department of veterans affairs, including selecting the department's secretary and overseeing its activities.



## Small Business Entrepreneurial Training for Veterans is Looking for a Few More Good Men & Women

The following information was found on the internet at: [www.wisgov.state.wi.us/pressreleases](http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/pressreleases)

(MADISON) – FastTrac, the entrepreneurial training course taught by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) of the UW Whitewater, has openings for additional veterans in an upcoming Madison class. The SBDC, in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), offers the seventeen-week FastTrac curriculum that will equip veterans to initiate or better manage a small business.

During 2003, courses were offered in Whitewater in June and Germantown in July. The Madison offering will meet on Wednesdays, from September 17 through January 28, 2004, from 6-9 p.m. at the Pyle Center, 702 Langdon Street, on the UW Madison campus.

FastTrac is a national curriculum developed in 1985 and sponsored by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation; it is currently offered in 38 states and has over 60,000 graduates. Since 1997, more than 400 entrepreneurs have graduated from the UW Whitewater SBDC FastTrac Program. This veteran-focused Wisconsin FastTrac offering is currently available in

only a select few states. Students will interact with experienced and successful entrepreneurs through focused instruction from a superior business curriculum.

The total cost for each student or business is \$1,500. However, through a 75% scholarship from the Veterans Corporation, a non-profit agency, the cost to be borne by the student or business is only \$375.

Graduating veterans will receive a voucher, also provided by the Veterans Corporation, that may be applied to the purchase of a computer or technical consulting services from Gateway, Inc.

For more information, contact Joe Bertalan, WDVA, at 608-267-7329 or 1-800-947-8387, or the Veterans Corporation at [www.veteranscorp.org](http://www.veteranscorp.org) and click on the Training Section. Course information may be obtained from Vic Grassman, SBDC UW Whitewater, at 262-472-4941.

**ALSO SEE PAGE 13**

## Troops to Teachers Program (TTT) Veterans, National Guard Personnel and Reservists May Receive Financial Assistance While Making Transition to Teaching Career

The following information was found on the internet at: [www.wisgov.state.wi.us/pressreleases](http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/pressreleases)

(MADISON) Through resources provided by the federal "No Child Left Behind Act" of 2002, eligible personnel who have military experience and are interested in becoming teachers through the *Troops To Teachers Program*, may now receive a stipend of up to \$5,000 to help defray certification costs incurred for academic credits or alternative certification programs. Veterans willing to teach in schools with high numbers of students from low income families may qualify for a \$10,000 bonus in lieu of the stipend.

Individuals accepting the stipend agree to teach, after certification, in a high need school district for three years. Those accepting the bonus must teach for three years in a qualifying school.

Eligibility categories for the program include retired military active-duty personnel, retired reservists and drilling members of the reserve components with at least six years of active duty or at least

10 years of reserve service. Both categories of drilling reservists must commit to an additional three years of service upon entering the Troops To Teachers Program. Most program participants are required to have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Those interested in a vocational education career need an associate's degree and occupational experience. Final approval for enrollment rests with the Department of Defense.

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) operates the federally funded Troops To Teachers Program in the state. The WDVA Troops To Teachers Office recruits participants, helps them select teacher certification programs and provides assistance in identifying employment opportunities.

Troops To Teachers was established in 1994 and is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). The "No Child

Left Behind Act" of 2001 provides for the continuation of Troops To Teachers through federal fiscal year 2006.

(The goal of Troops To Teachers (TTT) is to improve American education by providing mature, motivated, experienced and dedicated classroom teachers. Troops To Teachers helps relieve teacher shortages (especially in math, science, foreign languages and other high need subject areas). The program also provides positive role models for the nation's public school students and assists military personnel in their transition to teaching as a second career. The growing availability of alternative certification programs within the state will allow many Troops To Teachers participants to gain licensure while working as "apprentice" teachers.

For more information about Troops To Teachers in Wisconsin, contact Steve Campbell toll free at 1-800-947-8387 or e-mail [steve.campbell@dva.state.wi.us](mailto:steve.campbell@dva.state.wi.us).



ALSO SEE PAGE 12 FOR MORE INFORMATION

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
CENTER / BUSINESS OUTREACH BUSINESS  
OUTREACH**FastTrac**

Take Charge of Your Business

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
CENTER / BUSINESS OUTREACH

## **Veterans, Do You Need Help To Start Or Run Your Business?**

**Let FastTrac Put You  
In The Fast Lane To Success!**

- *FastTrac offers a practical approach to starting or running a successful business... in just 17 three-hour sessions.*
- *You will design a Business Plan tailored to your ambitions and goals through thought-provoking classroom lectures and challenging group discussions!*
- *Since 1985 over 60,000 entrepreneurs nationwide have taken FastTrac to ensure a successful new start-up or to improve a going-concern.*
- *A special veteran's training package from the Veterans' Corporation includes a 75% scholarship and a voucher for a new computer or technical consulting services from Gateway Computers.*

**FastTrac Course:**

*September 17 - January 28  
Wednesday Nights (6-9 pm)*

Pyle Center  
UW-Madison Campus  
702 Langdon Street  
Madison, WI 53706

### **For More Information Contact:**

*Vic Grassman, UW-Whitewater  
Small Business Development Center  
262-472-4941  
grassmav@uww.edu*

OR

*Joe Bertalan, Wisconsin Department of  
Veterans Affairs  
800-947-8387  
or  
608-267-7329  
joe.bertalan@dva.state.wi.us*



Register online visit <http://www.veteranscorp.org/> and click on training.

Phone: 262-472-3217  
Fax: 262-472-5692

## Veterans Affairs Grants \$1.7 Million Federal Grant for Additions to Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Union Grove

The following information was found on the internet at: [www.wisgov.state.wi.us/pressreleases](http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/pressreleases)

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) has been awarded a \$1,695,000 federal grant for expansion of the columbarium and the construction of a maintenance facility at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (SWVMC) at Union Grove. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Anthony J. Principi announced the award in a letter this week.

Located on the campus of the Southern Wisconsin Center near Union Grove, the WDVA cemetery covers approximately 105 acres and is designed to accommodate 60,000 interments when completed. Initial construction was funded by a federal matching grant.

WDVA Secretary Raymond G. Boland said, "About 50 percent of

Wisconsin's half-million veterans reside within the 12 county area surrounding the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs greatly appreciates the federal VA grant."

"Special gratitude is extended to VA Secretary Principi," Boland said. "This \$1.7 million grant will expand the capability of the columbarium, ensuring that 800 additional veterans and their family members receive the burial benefits to which they are entitled. It will also help towards providing maintenance on the grounds of this beautiful facility."

As of August 2003, there were 3,461 interments at the SWVMC. Construction on the



columbarium will begin soon, with completion expected by late fall, 2003. Completion of the maintenance facility is anticipated in the summer of 2004.

Boland said, "I would also like to express the department's appreciation to U.S. Senators Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold, and Congressman Paul Ryan for their continued efforts to help bring federal dollars back to Wisconsin."

## Cemetery Expansion Project—Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Union Grove

The following information was found on the internet at: [www.wisgov.state.wi.us/pressreleases](http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/pressreleases)

Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery will begin development of two additional columbarium's, surface drainage improvements, road widening and construction of a new maintenance facility beginning the week of September 29, 2003 and extending through June 28, 2004.

Burial operations and scheduling will continue as usual, however, there may be some restrictions in regards to various portions within the perimeter of the interment gardens, existing columbarium roadways and committal shelter during parts of the construction. The cemetery main entrance and exit to the administration office and chapel will not be affected by this construction.

Families and visitors may continue to visit the cemetery gravesites as usual during weekends and holidays. During weekdays, families and visitors are asked to please coordinate with the cemetery administration office for construction updates and access to certain portions of the cemetery.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding during this construction phase.

Please direct any inquiries on construction access to the cemetery administration office.

Marian Lewandowski Jr., Director  
Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery  
262- 878-5662

## WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM—CALENDAR OF EVENTS



**ALL EVENTS ARE HELD AT:**  
(Unless otherwise specified)

THE WISCONSIN  
VETERANS MUSEUM  
30 W. MIFFLIN ST  
MADISON WI 53703  
(Across from the Capitol)

### SERVICES:

Gallery & Gift Shop Hours:

Monday—Saturday (year-round)  
9 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Sunday (April—September)  
Noon—4:00 p.m.

**ADMISSION:** Free for museum and programs unless otherwise specified.

**GUIDED TOURS:** Available for Groups of 10 or more.

*Advance reservations required.*

### Research Center

Tuesday & Thursday (Year-round)  
10 a.m.—3 p.m.

Call to schedule an appointment

### FOR INFORMATION CALL:

608-267-1799

WEB PAGE

<http://museum.dva.state.wi.us>

## 2003

### **“Warriors: Navajo Code Talkers” by Kenji Kawano**

Traveling exhibit on display from:  
September 1, - November 30, 2003

“Warriors: The Navajo Code Talkers” is a powerful exhibition featuring the men whose language and bravery made defeat of the Japanese possible during World War II. These unique works by photographer Kenji Kawano depict these men and feature the work they did to develop and implement a form of coded communication that would not be understood by the Japanese. Using the native language of the Navajo, these men spoke orders and coded messages, which were never deciphered by the enemy.

## UPCOMING EVENTS—2004

### **Watch For Remembering the Holocaust A Series of Exhibits and Programs Scheduled for 2004.**

January 18—February 14, 2004  
The Anne Frank Story

March 1—June 30, 2004  
Displaced : Europe 1945-1946,  
Photographs by Maxine Rude

October 1—November 30, 2004  
Women in the Military:  
A Jewish Perspective

Information regarding the above exhibits can be found on the Museums Web Page at <http://museum.dva.state.wi.us>

## NEWS UPDATE FOR THE LOCAL AREA



### The HELP Center

The following information is from:  
The Mental Health Association  
in Waukesha County, Inc.

The **HELP Center**, a program of the Mental Health Association in Waukesha County, Inc. (MHA) provides free, short-term counseling (3-5 sessions) designed to assist individuals, couples and families with the following:

- ~ Problem Clarification
- ~ Problem Assessment
- ~ Solution-Focused Sessions
- ~ Referrals and

~ **Connection to Community Resources**  
to aid the client(s) in the areas defined by the initial clarification and assessment process

The HELP Center is now accepting new clients.

To schedule a HELP appointment please call First Call for HELP at (262) 547-3388.

***FCFH and the HELP Center are available to all Waukesha County residents free of charge and are completely anonymous.***



**HELP IS  
AVAILABLE**



### Flag Pageant & Salute to Veterans

The following information was received from:  
St. John's Northwestern Military Academy

St. John's Northwestern Military Academy cordially invites you and your families to its annual Flag Pageant and salute to veterans.

Each branch of our Armed Forces will be honored and we hope that you'll come and take part in recognizing a special group of men and women, our veterans.

We are very please to include the students from Cushing Elementary School.

Our special guest of honor for this salute to veterans is the recently retired Wisconsin Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Colonel Raymond Boland, U.S. Army, Retired.

**WHERE: St. John's Northwestern Military Academy  
Farrand Hall (Gymnasium)  
1101 N. Genesee St  
Delafield WI 53018-1498  
262-646-3311**

**WHEN: Monday—November 10, 2003**

**TIME: 1:30 p.m.**

Ample parking is available as is seating  
for a large crowd of patriots.

### Welcome Waukesha County Veterans

The following information was received from: North Lake Elementary School

**North Lake Elementary School** will be honoring area veterans at their school with a program and complimentary lunch. They are handicapped accessible.

#### The event will include:

- ◆ 9:30 a.m.— Welcome Social (in the school commons)
- ◆ 10:15 a.m.—Program by various student groups.  
(in the school gym)
- ◆ 11:00 a.m.—COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH  
for veterans and spouses with our students  
(in the multi-purpose room)
- ◆ 12:00 p.m.—Reading a favorite book, chapter, or story with  
students in their classroom in conjunction with  
National Young Reader's Day, which is also  
celebrated November 11th.

**WHEN: Tuesday—November. 11, 2003**

**TIME: 9:30 p.m.**

**WHERE: North Lake Elementary School  
N75 W31283 Hwy VV  
North Lake, WI 53064**

If you have any questions, please contact Paul Kreutzer,  
Superintendent at 262-966-2033.

If you are interested in participating in the reading with  
students please call Nancy Meister at 262-966-2033  
ext. 102 .